

Message Text

SECRET

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70

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 MMO-01 PM-04 NSC-05

OMB-01 /051 W

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R 251627Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7054

INFO COMNAVTRACOM KENITRA MOROCCO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMNAVLTTELCOM WASHDC

NAVCOMMSTA SIDI YAHIA MOROCCO

SECDEF ISA/DSAA

USCINCEUR GERMANY ECJ4/7

S E C R E T RABAT 5714

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, MO

SUBJECT: CIVILIAN STRENGTH REDUCTION AT US NAVAL FACILITIES
IN MOROCCO

REF: COMNAVTRACOM KENITRA 201744Z NOV 75 (REPEATED TO
DEPT BY RABAT 5671)

1. REFTEL REQUESTED EMBASSY'S COMMENTS ON ESTIMATED POLITICAL
IMPACT OF A REDUCTION BY JUNE 30, 1976 OF 26 MOROCCAN EMPLOYEES
(PAID FROM APPROPRIATED FUNDS) AT NAVTRACOM KENITRA AND 10
AT NAVCOMMSTA SIDI YAHIA. AN ADDITIONAL 13 MOROCCAN EMPLOYEES
PAID OUT OF NON-APPROPRIATED FUNDS WOULD BE RELEASED AT KENITRA.
THESE REDUCTIONS WOULD AMOUNT TO 39 LOCAL EMPLOYEES OUT OF A
TOTAL OF 515 AT KENITRA AND 10 OUT OF 154 AT SIDI YAHIA.

2. IN EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT, SUCH CUTS CAN BE EXPECTED TO HAVE
AN ADVERSE POLITICAL IMPACT ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THESE TWO U.S.
COMMANDS ON ONE HAND AND THE LABOR UNION AND LOCAL COMMUNITY
ON THE OTHER. THERE WOULD ALSO BE POSSIBILITY OF NEGATIVE IMPACT
IN BROADER CONTEXT OF US-MOROCCAN RELATIONS.

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3. THE PROJECTED CUTS ARE SUBSTANTIAL AND WILL, AT KENITRA IN

PARTICULAR, LARGELY AFFECT OLDER EMPLOYEES WITH LONG SERVICE WITH USG WHO NOT ELIGIBLE FOR RETIREMENT BENEFITS. THESE EMPLOYEES AT SAME TIME WILL CLEARLY ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTY IN FINDING OTHER EMPLOYMENT BECAUSE OF PREFERENCE OF LOCAL INDUSTRY FOR MUCH YOUNGER RECRUITS. MOST OF THOSE AFFECTED, INCLUDING SIDI YAHIA EMPLOYEES, RESIDE IN KENITRA, WHERE CURRENT JOB MARKET IS ESPECIALLY DEPRESSED. INASMUCH AS MOROCCAN SOCIETY IS HIGHLY PATERNALISTIC AND OFFERS ONLY LIMITED JOB MOBILITY, LABOR UNION, WITH LIKELY SUPPORT OF MINISTRY OF LABOR, WILL INEVITABLY MOUNT STRONG RESISTANCE AGAINST PROJECTED REDUCTIONS. WE WOULD ALSO NEED TO BE PREPARED FOR LIKELIHOOD OF PALACE INTERVENTION AT EARLY STAGE.

4. REGARDING BROADER IMPLICATIONS, ABRUPT REDUCTION COULD RAISE QUESTIONS IN GOM AND PUBLIC MINDS ABOUT OUR LONGER TERM INTENTIONS AT KENITRA AND SIDI YAHIA. REDUCTION MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS A SIGN OF DIMINISHING U.S. INTEREST IN MOROCCO AND IN KING HASSAN. AN EXPLANATION AT HIGH LEVEL OF GOM WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PLACE CUTS IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE.

5. EMBASSY RECOGNIZES THE DESIRABILITY OF IMPROVED COST-EFFECTIVENESS

OF OPERATIONS AT KENITRA AND SIDI YAHIA. PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES SUGGEST, HOWEVER, THAT AMOUNTS WHICH WOULD BE SAVED IN SHORT RUN ARE RELATIVELY SMALL, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF POTENTIAL NEGATIVE POLITICAL FALL-OUT. FROM BROAD POLICY POINT OF VIEW, WE QUESTION ADVISABILITY OF GOING AHEAD WITH PERSONNEL CUTS OF THIS SCOPE WITHOUT OUR HAVING FIRST DECIDED UPON A COHERENT, COORDINATED USG APPROACH TO OUR FUTURE NEED FOR THESE FACILITIES, AND BEFORE WE ARE IN A POSITION TO RELATE SUCH CUTS TO OUR FUTURE OVERALL BILATERAL MILITARY RELATIONSHIP IN DISCUSSIONS WITH MOROCCAN AUTHORITIES.

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